PARTS OF THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT

ARE OF POOR REPRODUCTIVE QUALITY

CERTAINES PARTIES DU DOCUMENT ORIGINAL

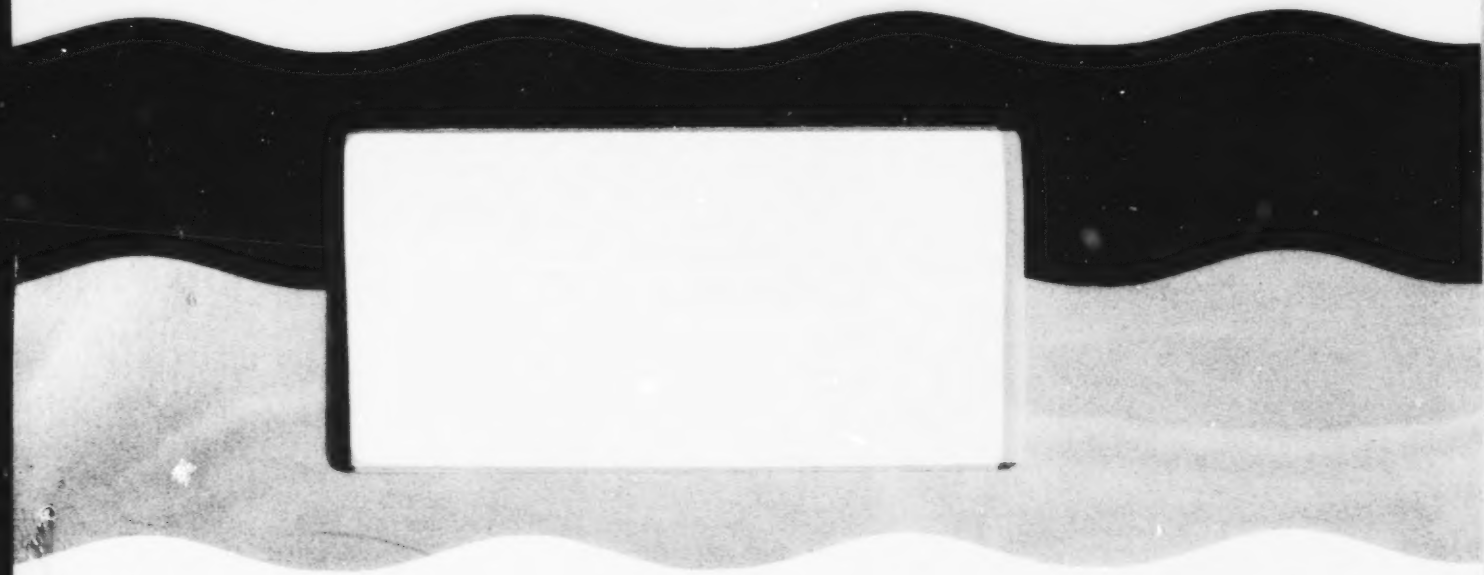
SONT DE PIÈTRE QUALITÉ DE REPRODUCTION

Transport Canada Transports Canada

TP 1624

Marine Casualty Investigations

Enquêtes sur les accidents maritimes



Investigation Report to the Minister pursuant to sections 542 or 545 of the Canada Shipping Act

Rapport d'investigation au Ministre conformément aux articles 542 ou 545 de la Loi sur la marine marchande du Canada

CA1
DT 10
86
R462

Canada

.CA1
DT 70
86
R462

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

INVESTIGATION REPORT INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF A CREW MEMBER FROM THE PANAMANIAN VESSEL "SAVIC" AFTER JUMPING FROM A LIFE FLOAT AT LANORAIE, QUEBEC, ON JULY 20, 1986.

Library and Information Centre / Centre de Documentation (GSLA)
RECEIVED / REÇU LE
OCT 24 1988
Transport Canada / Transports Canada

REPORT No. 462

These sections of the Investigation Report prepared pursuant to Section 542, or of the Preliminary Inquiry Report prepared pursuant to Section 545, of the Canada Shipping Act, are released for accident prevention purposes only and are confined to cause-related circumstances.

This report and its contents may be deficient and misleading if used in any other process and are not to be used or admitted in evidence in any legal proceedings, either civil or criminal, arising out of the casualty described in the report. The statements, opinions and findings in the report are those of the Marine Casualty Investigations Division only and do not constitute admissions made by or on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada.

Ces sections du rapport d'investigation ou du rapport préliminaire sont rédigées en vertu des articles 542 et 545 respectifs de la Loi sur la marine marchande du Canada et ne sont publiées qu'à des fins de prévention des accidents seulement et ne portent que sur les circonstances entourant le cas à l'étude.

Ce rapport et son contenu peuvent être insuffisants et trompeurs s'ils sont utilisés à d'autres fins et ne peuvent être utilisés ou acceptés comme preuve dans quelque procédure que ce soit, au civil ou au criminel, même si ces procédures découlent de l'accident décrit dans ledit rapport. Les déclarations, les opinions et les constatations de ce rapport appartiennent uniquement à la section des Enquêtes sur les accidents maritimes et ne constituent pas une acceptation de la part ou au nom de Sa Majesté du chef du Canada.

392877

INVESTIGATION REPORT INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE DEATH OF A CREW MEMBER FROM THE PANAMANIAN VESSEL "SAVIC" AFTER JUMPING FROM A LIFE FLOAT AT LANORAIE, QUEBEC, ON JULY 20, 1986.

Particulars of Vessel

Name	"SAVIC" ex "CLIFFS VICTORY"
Official Number	17015-NY
Port of Registry	PANAMA
Call Sign	3EFG4
Gross Tonnage	11,151
Net Tonnage	7,309
Length	716.25 ft
Beam	62.15 ft
Depth	34.4 ft
Draught (at time of incident)	F : 13'10" A : 18'06"
Type	Bulk Carrier
Built	by Oregon Ship Building Corp. Cleveland, Ohio in 1945
Re-built	by Bethlehem Steel Co. Baltimore, Ill. in 1951
Re-built	by The American Shipbuilding Co. Chicago, Ill. in 1957
Propulsion	steam turbine of 8,500 b.h.p. by Joshua Hendy Iron Works Sunnyvale, Calif. in 1945. 23 knots
Cargo	Nil
Crew	21
Classification	American Bureau of Shipping +A1 Great Lakes & St. Lawrence River
Owners	HAI International Inc. Panama

Operators	Sea Services Inc. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.

Navigating Equipment

Radar 1	Sperry, type 411-S-1, Mk 16
Radar 2	Sperry, type 411-1, Mk 16
Direction Finder	MacKay, type 106 B
Echo Sounder	Raytheon
Loran C	Decca 1024
VHF 1	Epsco, model RT 78
VHF 2	Lorain
SSB	Redifon, RMT 1500 S
Gyro Compass	Sperry Mark XIV, model 1
Magnetic Compass	one (1)

Particulars of Life Float

Serial Number	466
Length	7.5 ft
Breadth	4.0 ft
Depth	0.88 ft
Type	Life-saving apparatus
Built	by Welin Davit & Boat Perth Amboy, N.J. in 1961
Inspected	USCG (E.SC.) 160.027/47/1

Description of Vessel

The "SAVIC" is a typical Great Lakes bulk carrier with accommodation for the deck department forward, above the forecastle, and accommodation for the engine-room department aft, above the engine-room. There are four (4) holds forward of the engine-room and one (1) aft. Bridge orders to the engine-room

are transmitted through an engine telegraph.

NOTE: All times in this report are expressed in Eastern Daylight Saving Time (UTC minus 4 hours).

Background

The Panamanian vessel "SAVIC" was anchored off Lanoraie, Quebec, waiting for further instructions regarding her loading and/or trip to the scrapyard.

On July 20, 1986, a crew member disappeared after jumping from a life float into the river whilst on a pleasure trip from the anchored vessel to a local beach.

Immediate rescue efforts by the four remaining persons on board the life float were unsuccessful. The crew member was not wearing a lifejacket but was reported to be a good swimmer. Despite an extensive search of the immediate area, the body was not found until five (5) days later.

Particulars of Deceased

Name	Luis B. Ledres
Position Aboard Vessel	Fitter
Age	47
Address	Metro Manila, Philippines

Narrative

On June 12, 1986, the Panamanian registered steamship "SAVIC" departed from her berth at section #37 in Montreal Harbour and proceeded down the St. Lawrence River. She arrived at the Lanoraie anchorage at 1230. A pilot was on board, and the trip was uneventful.

The "SAVIC" was formerly named the "CLIFFS VICTORY" and had served on the Great Lakes as a bulk carrier. The same crew had remained on board the vessel for more than six months in Montreal Harbour and at the Lanoraie anchorage, awaiting further instructions regarding the voyage to the scrapyard.

On July 20, 1986, a boat drill was carried out using only a life float. Crew members stationed in the life float were given permission to have a picnic ashore and were to return later in the day.

A Jacob's ladder was rigged over the vessel's port side in

way of the forward end of the after accommodation and was lowered close to the surface of the water. Crew members lifted the life float from the main deck using a purchase fitted on the end of the port boom on the gantry crane. The life float was swung outboard and lowered into the water on the port side adjacent to the Jacob's ladder. A painter held the life float alongside the ship. Three crew members (including the deceased - the fitter) and a guest climbed down the Jacob's ladder and boarded the life float. The chief officer was in charge of the operation and remained on the main deck. The time, as recorded by the vessel, was 1230.

When the carpenter, who was the fifth and last person to board, set his foot down on the life float, it sank deeply and showed a tendency to capsize. Subsequently the fitter told the carpenter to come aboard the life float because he, the fitter, was going to jump into the water and swim ashore. The crew members were surprised to hear this and watched in amazement as the fitter removed his sandals and lifejacket, and then carried out his intentions.

Being concerned, the carpenter quickly boarded the life float and let go the painter. The fitter did not respond to the plea of the crew members to return to the life float and kept swimming away. Suddenly the fitter cried for help; he seemed to be suffering from cramp. Meanwhile, the crew members on the life float rowed towards the person in distress, two using paddles and the other two using their hands. By the time the life float was brought near to the swimmer, the man appeared exhausted and was drowning. A lifejacket was thrown towards him but he did not seem to see it, possibly because his field of vision was reduced by his sun-glasses.

When the life float was close enough, the oiler on board tied a line around his waist, made the other end fast to the life float, and dove into the water to search for the victim. The able-bodied seaman (AB) also jumped from the life float into the water. They were unable to search to any depth. The victim was seen to rise twice to the surface and then disappeared. The time was now about 1245.

By now most of the crew, including the master and the officer on watch, had gathered on the stern of the vessel to watch the rescue operation. In the meantime someone from the vessel had thrown a life buoy towards the man in the water. An observer onshore also became concerned when she saw a man fall over the side of the life float and telephoned the Quebec Police Force in Tracy to inform them of the incident that had taken place. After many telephone attempts by her to reach the proper authorities, Search and Rescue (SAR) was informed of the incident. Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) in Montreal then called the

"SAVIC" at the request of SAR; at 1330, the radio operator who had remained in the wheel-house confirmed that a man was overboard and was being carried downriver by the current.

A neighbour of the previously mentioned onshore observer went to the scene using a small runabout. Realizing the seriousness of the incident, he returned to the shore to disembark his two small children, and came back with another man to help him in the rescue. They retrieved the lifejacket and lifebuoy and tried to tow the life float back to the "SAVIC". It proved to be too much for the small launch so the neighbour took the oiler and guest on board and brought them back to the "SAVIC". A second runabout, which was near by, towed the life float back to the "SAVIC" with the two remaining crew members.

The "CG 1205", a SAR inshore rescue craft, was tasked at 1330 to take part in the search for the missing crew member and was on the scene by 1356.

Further attempts to rescue the victim were made by the "CG 1205"; however, these were unsuccessful. The victim was believed to have sunk to the bottom. The search was called off by SAR in Quebec City at 1600 on July 20, and the matter was handed over to the Quebec Police Force in Tracy as a missing person case.

At 0820, on July 25, 1986, the "FERBEC" sighted a body near buoy S126 off Île des Barques. The sighting was reported to the Montreal VTS Centre. At 0821 the Canadian Marine Rescue Auxiliary (CMRA) vessel "1230" was tasked and arrived on the scene at 0930. The victim's body was retrieved in position 46°05.5'N, 073°00.0'W and the CMRA vessel "1230" returned to Sainte-Anne de Sorel where an ambulance was waiting to transport the body to the morgue in Montreal, Quebec, for an autopsy.

Analysis

1. Weather forecast and weather conditions

The marine forecast between Gananoque and Trois-Rivières issued by Environment Canada at 0300 Eastern Daylight Saving Time Sunday, July 20, 1986, and valid until midnight was as follows:

> Winds variable at less than 10 knots this morning becoming mainly south-westerly 10 to 15 later today then decreasing to less than 10 knots this evening. Misty this morning. Mostly cloudy with showers or thunder-showers later today. Risk of gusting in thunder-showers. Visibility over 6 miles except at times one to 4 miles in morning mist or showers. High 25

to 27.

The weather conditions encountered at the scene during the disappearance and the rescue operations, are not considered to have been a contributing factor to this accident.

2. **The current**

Extracting from the Sailing Directions, Gulf and River St. Lawrence, sixth edition, 1985:

> From Lanoraie to the Port of Sorel limit, the river current has an average rate of 1.8 to 2 knots.

Immediately after jumping into the water, the fitter swam away from the life float in the same direction as the current flow. Even though the crew members on board the life float hastily let go the painter, they were unable to reach the victim in time. The fitter had drifted too far away and, being exhausted, had begun to drown, making any rescue attempt more difficult. Taking into consideration the rate of the current and the time interval between the arrival on the scene of the "CG 1205" and the time the victim was last seen, the SAR party began their search 2 miles downstream from the "SAVIC". SAR later determined that the current had a rate of 2.2 knots.

3. **Hypothermia**

The water temperature in the Lanoraie anchorage is not recorded on a regular basis but information from the Water Resources Branch of the Environment Conservation Service estimates that the water temperature on July 20, 1986, was about 20°C. The air temperature was 23°C. The autopsy did not indicate that the victim had suffered from hypothermia.

4. **Autopsy report**

An autopsy was performed in Montreal and it was determined that the cause of death was drowning. The autopsy did not reveal any signs of injury that might have been sustained before the jump over the side. The coroner elected not to carry out blood alcohol tests.

5. **Information broadcast**

Upon receipt of a call from SAR in Quebec City, Montreal Coast Guard Radio Station issued the following 'all stations' marine information broadcast on VHF and CW under a security (SECURITY) prefix, at 1339 on July 20, 1985:

> Motor vessel "SAVIC" anchored at Lanoraie anchorage. Report one person drowned at the back of ship at 1630Z. All ships are requested to keep a sharp lookout. Any sighting reported to be passed to SAR centre via the nearest Coast Guard Station or VTS.

There was no response to this communiqué until 0820 on July 25, 1986 when the "FERBEC" reported to Monteal VTS Centre that a body had been sighted floating near buoy S126 off Île des Barques. SAR were advised at 0821 and the CMRA vessel "1230" was tasked at 0900. The body was recovered at 0948 on July 25, 1986, in position 46°05.5'N, 073°00.0'W.

6. Life float

A life float is a life-saving apparatus so constructed as to be entirely reversible, i.e. it may be used equally well with either side up. It consists essentially of an elliptical body which forms the buoyant frame. In the centre of the frame, there is normally a net or box grating. The life float on board the "SAVIC" had a rigid canvas platform inside the frame seemingly more suited to the carrying of people than for life-saving purposes.

Part C of Chapter III of the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention which is applicable to the "SAVIC" and entitled Life-Saving Appliance Requirements states, in brief that:

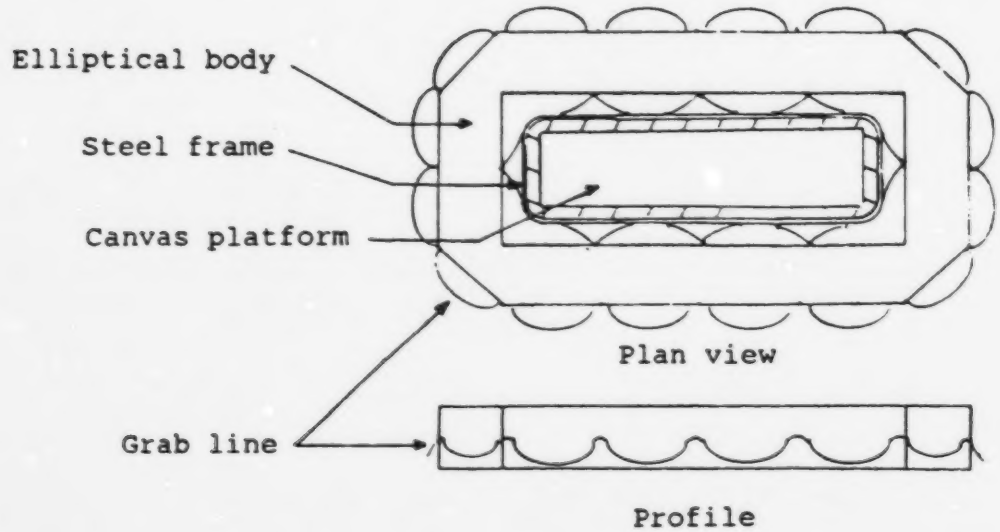
The markings on a rigid liferaft shall include:

- name and port of registry of the ship to which it belongs (40.7.1)
- name of approving authority (40.7.4)
- number of persons it is permitted to accommodate (40.7.5).

(For excerpts of this regulation see Annex I.)

The life float has a supporting capacity of 20 persons stencilled on the buoyancy chamber but the manufacturer's capacity plate specified only 15 persons. A buoyant apparatus such as a life float is designed to correctly support people in the water and will therefore serve a larger number of survivors than a lifeboat of the same size. A device such as a life float has no rating to carry people. The crew confused its support capacity for its possible carrying capacity.

LIFE FLOAT



Part B of Chapter III of the SOLAS convention which is applicable to the "SAVIC" and entitled Ship Requirements states, in brief that:

- There shall be a sufficient number of trained persons on board for mustering and assisting untrained persons (10.2)

- A deck officer or certificated person shall be placed in charge of each survival craft to be used (10.4).

(For excerpts of this regulation see Annex II.)

It was a common and dangerous practice for the crew aboard the vessel to use the life float for excursions. It would appear that the crew aboard the life float (including the deceased) should have been more closely supervised. All aboard having become close friends, it is assumed that supervision was not as formal as it perhaps, should have been.

7. Lifeboats

The "SAVIC" carried lifeboats, including one fitted with an engine. The vessel had no boats in the water for general use as a tender; because of the distance to a suitable docking facility from the Lanoraie anchorage it is normal to make use of one of the fee-paying passenger tenders which ply the waters for this purpose. However the "SAVIC" could

have made one of the lifeboats available to the crew for their trip ashore. Due to the speed with which the man was lost and the fact that other boats were on scene, it was not deemed necessary to lower a lifeboat even after the accident. The lifeboats had not been lowered during the boat drill.

8. **Boat drill**

Chapter III of the SOLAS convention which is applicable to the "SAVIC" and titled Life-Saving Appliances and Arrangements states, in brief that:

Each boat drill shall include:

- sounding of the general emergency alarm consisting of seven or more short blasts followed by one long blast of the ship's whistle ((50) & (6.4.2))
- reporting to stations and preparing for duties as described in the muster list (18.3.4.2)
- checking that lifejackets are correctly donned (18.3.4.4)
- drills shall, as far as applicable, be conducted as if there were an actual emergency (18.3.6).

(For excerpts of these regulations see Annex III.)

The general emergency signal was not sounded prior to the boat drill on board the "SAVIC" on July 20, 1986. Evidence suggests that there was no muster of crew to any designated place on board before the life float was lowered.

It is implied in these regulations that the person in charge of a boat drill should make sure that all crew members mustered should wear lifejackets to perform and be instructed in their duties. Evidence suggests that although some lifejackets were available, not all made available were worn.

Five (5) persons had planned and were given permission to go ashore, but only three (3) lifejackets were carried aboard the life float. There were two (2) oars available.

9. **Certification of vessel at the time of the incident**

Safety Construction	Issued at Chicago, Ill., U.S.A. on December 17, 1985, valid to January 6, 1986

Safety Radiotelegraphy	Issued at Chicago, Ill., U.S.A. on December 12, 1985, valid to February 12, 1986
Load Line (provisional)	issued at Chicago, Ill., U.S.A. on December 17, 1985, valid to January 6, 1986

On behalf of the Republic of Panama, the classification society drew up all reports and issued all certificates. However, at the time of the incident on July 20, 1986, all certificates of class had expired. As the vessel was not in possession of a valid Cargo Ship Safety Equipment Certificate, a report was drawn up on October 14, 1985, but a certificate was not issued. The vessel's safety equipment was once again inspected on December 14, 1985, and again a certificate was not issued.

10. The victim

Tragically, Mr. Ledres drowned on his birthday. Although it is known that Mr. Ledres attempted to have a celebration drink for his birthday, reportedly he was unable to find any alcohol aboard the "SAVIC" that day. Mr. Ledres did not appear to be intoxicated and his actions prior to jumping overboard seemed to bear this out. Typical of many such drownings often involving reportedly good swimmers, Mr. Ledres was unable to swim very far and reach for the lifebuoy and lifejacket thrown to him. Although lifejackets were available, Mr. Ledres chose not to wear one before attempting to swim ashore. His lightweight summer clothing should not have hampered him. Mr. Ledres was apparently well thought of by other crew members and there is nothing to indicate foul play.

11. Qualifications and experience of personnel

The master of the "SAVIC" holds a Panamanian Master's Ocean-Going certificate issued in September 1985, and valid to December 1986. He has been at sea for 48 years, and Master since January 1958.

The chief officer holds a Panamanian Master's Ocean-Going certificate issued in January 1983, and valid to January 1988. He has been at sea for 16 years including 5 years as chief mate.

The second officer holds an unlimited Panamanian Second Deck Officer's certificate issued in May 1985, and valid to August 1986. He has been at sea for 8 years including 6 years as an officer.

Findings

The drowning of Mr. Ledres was due to the imprudent actions of the individual himself. It would appear that the following factors contributed to his death:

- failure by the deceased to appreciate the dangers of swimming in the strong current which prevailed;
- failure by the deceased to utilize a lifejacket or other personal flotation device; and
- failure by the vessel to more closely supervise the use of the life float by the crew.

Other Findings

The boat drill aboard the "SAVIC" fell far short of the requirements prescribed by the SOLAS convention.

The boat drill carried out at the time of the incident had not been properly supervised.

The "SAVIC" failed to immediately report to a Coast Guard Station that she was experiencing a man overboard situation.

The "SAVIC" failed to provide safe access from the ship to the shore; one of the lifeboats could have been offered as a tender instead of the life float.

The life float used in the attempt to ferry the crew ashore was unsuitable and not designed for such an operation.

The water was dark and murky, hampering the immediate rescue operation carried out by the crew members.

The prompt assistance of those ashore as well as the unselfish attitude of the crew members on board the life float were seamanlike and proper.

OTTAWA, ONTARIO
FEBRUARY, 1987.

ANNEX I

Regulation 40

Rigid liferafts

1 Rigid liferafts shall comply with the requirements of regulation 38 and, in addition, shall comply with the requirements of this regulation.

7 *Markings on rigid liferafts*

The liferaft shall be marked with

.1 name and port of registry of the ship to which it belongs;

.2 maker's name or trade mark;

.3 serial number;

.4 name of approving authority;

.5 number of persons it is permitted to accommodate over each entrance in characters not less than 100 mm in height of a colour contrasting with that of the liferaft;

.6 SOLAS;

.7 type of emergency pack enclosed;

.8 length of painter;

.9 maximum permitted height of stowage above waterline (drop-test height);

.10 launching instructions.

ANNEX II

Regulation 10

Manning of survival craft and supervision

1 This regulation applies to all ships.

2 There shall be a sufficient number of trained persons on board for mustering and assisting untrained persons.

3 There shall be a sufficient number of crew members, who may be deck officers or certificated persons, on board for operating the survival craft and launching arrangements required for abandonment by the total number of persons on board.

4 A deck officer or certificated person shall be placed in charge of each survival craft to be used. However, the Administration, having due regard to the nature of the voyage, the number of persons on board and the characteristics of the ship, may permit persons practised in the handling and operation of liferafts to be placed in charge of liferafts in lieu of persons qualified as above. A second-in-command shall also be nominated in the case of lifeboats.

5 The person in charge of the survival craft shall have a list of the survival craft crew and shall see that the crew under his command are acquainted with their duties. In lifeboats the second-in-command shall also have a list of the lifeboat crew.

ANNEX III

Regulation 18

Abandon ship training and drills

1 This regulation applies to all ships.

3.4 Each abandon ship drill shall include

.1 summoning of passengers and crew to muster stations with the alarm required by regulation 6.4.2 and ensuring that they are made aware of the order to abandon ship specified in the muster list;

.2 reporting to stations and preparing for the duties described in the muster list;

.3 checking that passengers and crew are suitably dressed;

.4 checking that lifejackets are correctly donned;

.5 lowering of at least one lifeboat after any necessary preparation for launching;

.6 starting and operating the lifeboat engine;

.7 operation of davits used for launching liferafts.

3.5 Different lifeboats shall, as far as practicable, be lowered in compliance with the requirements of paragraph 3.4.5 at successive drills.

3.6 Drills shall, as far as practicable, be conducted as if there were an actual emergency.

ANNEX III

Regulation 6

Communications

4 *On-board communications and alarm systems*

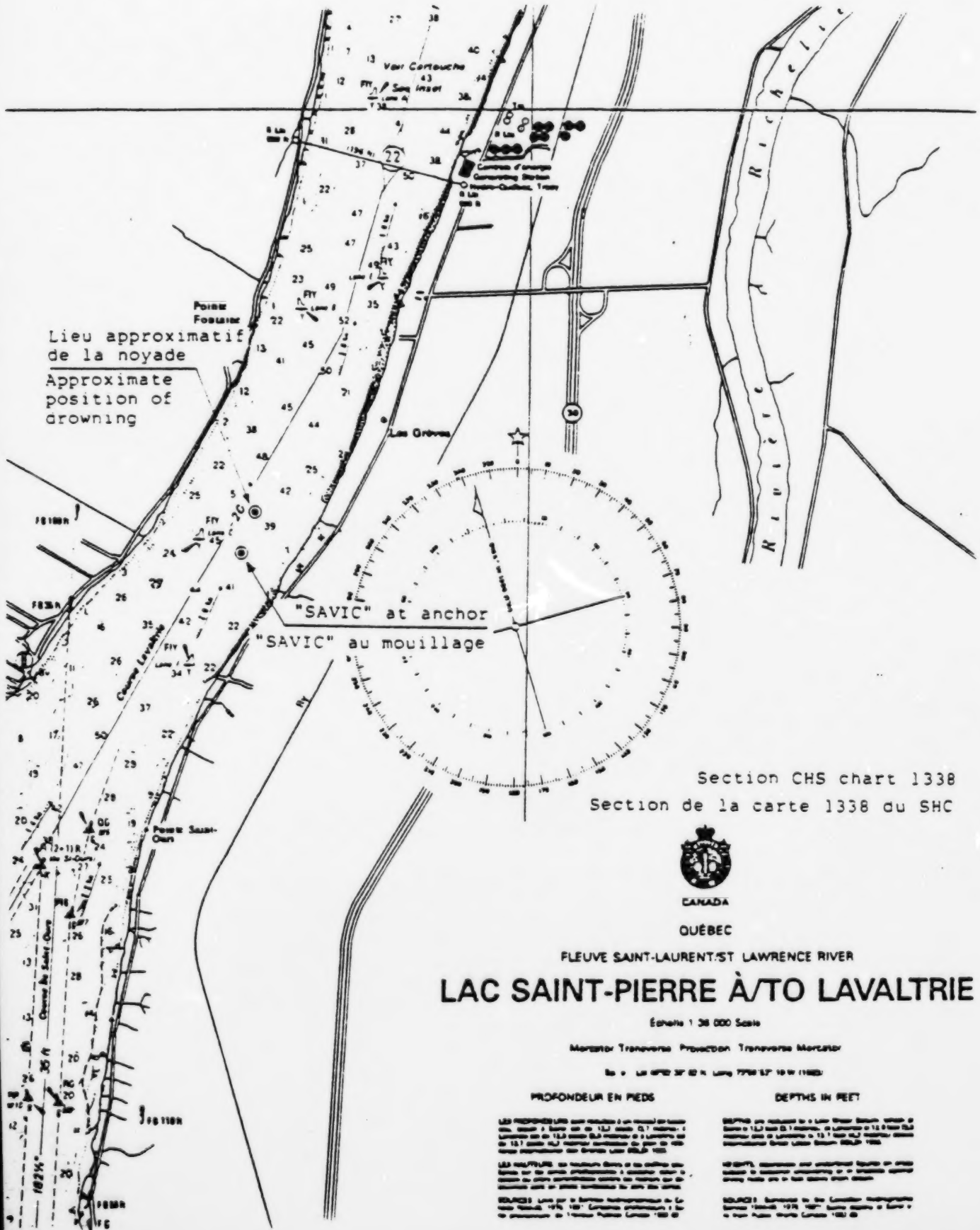
4.1 An emergency means comprised of either fixed or portable equipment or both shall be provided for two-way communications between emergency control stations, muster and embarkation stations and strategic positions on board.

4.2 A general emergency alarm system complying with the requirements of regulation 50 shall be provided and shall be used for summoning passengers and crew to muster stations and to initiate the actions included in the muster list. The system shall be supplemented by either a public address system or other suitable means of communication.

Regulation 50

General emergency alarm system

The general emergency alarm system shall be capable of sounding the general emergency alarm signal consisting of seven or more short blasts followed by one long blast on the ship's whistle or siren and additionally on an electrically operated bell or klaxon or other equivalent warning system, which shall be powered from the ship's main supply and the emergency source of electrical power required by regulation II-1/42 or II-1/43, as appropriate. The system shall be capable of operation from the navigating bridge and, except for the ship's whistle, also from other strategic points. The system shall be audible throughout all the accommodation and normal crew working spaces.


Lieu approximatif de la noyade
Approximate position of drowning
"SAVIC" at anchor
"SAVIC" au mouillage
Section CHS chart 1338
Section de la carte 1338 du SHC
CANADA
QUÉBEC
FLEUVE SAINT-LAURENT/ST LAWRENCE RIVER
LAC SAINT-PIERRE À/TO LAVALTRIE
PROFONDEUR EN PIEDS
DEPTHS IN FEET